

October 1, 2008

Please accept my apology for not being more specific in our original application for Neighborhood Development Funding. I did not specifically list the benefits that the students of the Kent School Doctoral Program provide to our wonderful city of Louisville.

Please recall that one of the primary uses of the requested funds is for doctoral students to present their peer-reviewed research in professional conferences. However, we impress upon students the first order of importance is to answer the “*so-what question*”: *So what* does the data tell us that can help the people in the study and, more specifically, the people here in Louisville?

The following are examples of doctoral students’ research underway. The knowledge gained by these research projects will inform agencies and services specifically located here in Louisville, Kentucky.

1. **Medically Underserved Residents of Louisville**

Theresa Hayden is analyzing data on approximately 1,200 medically underserved Louisvillians who were screened for health care needs. That which is learned from this dissertation can be used to inform public health policies and practices in Louisville.

2. **Veterans in Louisville**

Concerned about the plight of veterans in Louisville, LeAnn Bruce is working with Ft. Knox on a seamless transition program to ease the transition of Louisville’s military families back into the general population and/or to new assignments. Because Ft. Knox is a large regional mobilization and demobilization center that services soldiers from 8 states (AR, IL, IN, KY, OH, MI, and WI), Louisville will continue to have an insurgence of veterans and their families. A typical scenario is that wounded soldiers are here for rehab and transition and then want to relocate to Louisville. Some leave the Army with disability or retirement checks, but others leave with nothing if they have not served for two years. They may become part of our homeless population. LeAnn is passionate about our veterans having the care and services that they need and deserve.

3. **When Older Adults Must Lose Autonomy**

Joseph D’Ambrosio’s doctoral work is focused on developing both an understanding and a framework for helping older adults and their families make hard decisions regarding reduction of autonomy for older adults. For example, how do families decide when it is best for older adults to stop driving, or enter nursing homes, especially when there is familial conflict in making the decision? As our population in Louisville continues to age, social workers must be able to respond to issues of aging and the complexity that is involved in making hard family decisions. Currently, there is a gap in research and there is no decision-making framework that can guide families in these difficult situations.

4. **Predictors of Child Neglect**

In one of the most difficult and important topics under study, Bertha Mucherera's research will benefit children under the age of 3 by having knowledge of the predictors, children being neglect. Programs geared toward first-time parents are expected to reduce the high percentage of their children who are in foster care due to child neglect. Agencies working with parents will be able to provide for these parents before any abuse occurs thus mitigating the negative results of neglect on our future population.

5. **Portraits of the Dying Poor:**

The Lived Experience of Medicaid Patients with Advanced Cancer -Little is known about the experience of persons diagnosed with life threatening advanced cancer who are receiving Medicaid services—the focus of Tara Schapmire's dissertation. While many Americans cannot afford health insurance or are underinsured, only the poorest of the poor are eligible for Medicaid benefits. Workers need to understand these clients' reactions to their diagnoses, their experiences with health care providers, their social supports, values and needs related to their illnesses, and end-of-life care needs. Findings confirm the need to make palliative care and services available to this often underserved population and the importance of understanding and advocating for their special concerns and needs. Unfortunately, these problems touch the lives of thousands of Louisvillians.

6. **Retention in School**

Keeping students in school is the focus of Angie Napier's dissertation. Even defining retention is problematic—is it measured by days in school in any given year? By finishing 6th or 9th grades, or high school? Angie's work will provide a model to understand this phenomenon and predictors of success (however defined). This work can inform planners on ways to increase the completed grade levels of Louisville students at all levels.

7. **Leadership Styles**

Captain Amanda Farley's research explores the effectiveness of educators' leadership styles. She will identify best practices for educational leadership that can also apply to community leadership.

8. **Long -Term Care - Home and Community- Based Services**

About 15 doctoral students have worked for three years on seeking solutions for elders who prefer to age and die in their own homes. Continued growth of the elder population has made providing care for elders increasingly difficult. As many choose to age in place, both public and private sectors are being forced to respond. Home health care and home care aides provide one way to meet this crisis. However, retention of home care aides, work generally viewed by society as low-status and low-skill, has proven problematic. Solutions to this problem will serve all Louisvillians.

A secondary but critical need for the requested funds is to meet periodically over lunch with four constituency groups: faculty of the doctoral program, current and potential students from the community, and university staff who help us make the program work every day of the year. One of the keys to the success of this doctoral program is ongoing recognition of faculty's investment in students. Few social work doctoral programs nationwide are enjoying the success of this

program and one of the main reasons is the continual expression of appreciation to faculty, as well as staff throughout the university who help in hundreds of ways, and encouragement to students.

Please call if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ruth Huber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

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